

# Destiny Calls His Name

## *CHAPTER 1*



A shimmering scroll materialized before Ethan Grey, signaling the summons he had expected for so long. Despite his preparation, its sudden appearance startled him. The parchment was precisely bound and sealed with the distinctive wax crest

of the Academy.

Ethan sat tucked away in the quietest corner of the massive library, where enchanted lamps gave off a soft, golden glow over the books in front of him. The faint aroma of aged parchment mingled with traces of residual magic, creating an atmosphere of familiarity and calm. Surrounded by rows upon rows of towering bookshelves taller than his confidence, he felt right at home. As he looked around, the shelves rose like ancient trees, their leaves bound in ink and memory.

Immersed in the study of forgotten prophecies, Ethan had been tracing each symbol with purpose, his quiet translations shaping a rhythm of focus and intent. The book breathed of secrets older than the stars, its symbols winding beneath his touch. Ethan's voice, a soft hum of translation,

carried through the still air like a spell half-remembered. Then, the silence broke. His searching finger brushed a page that was never meant to be, parchment born from nothing, whispering to be found.

Adjusting his glasses, Ethan took the scroll, his heart pounding in his chest. The wax seal gleamed like a heartbeat in candlelight. One slow inhale steadied his spirit - and then, with a soft crack, the seal gave way, its secrets unfurling like fate itself.

The letter didn't waste any time:

*Ethan Grey,*

*The Celestial Convergence project will be starting soon. Your presence is required at the Hall of Assignments at first light tomorrow. There, you will receive your task and meet your partner.*

*Regards,*

*Orion Galen*

*Headmaster of Aetherion Academy*

Ethan's thoughts spun as he read. The Celestial Convergence was an annual event at Aetherion Academy, a project that tested all junior and senior students with this massive project that pushed them to their limits. Participation was mandatory. The event always started after the first month of the school year, but you never knew exactly when your turn to receive the assignment would come.

Fate drew names as it pleased, and this time, it had whispered his sooner than he'd expected. Perhaps that was the point: destiny never waits for the perfect moment.

The pressure was real. The Celestial Convergence counted for nearly a third of the grade required to graduate and earn the title of Arcanist. Messing up wasn't an option - not for someone like Ethan. Coming from a low-class family, the first in his bloodline to even set foot in Aetherion Academy, he couldn't afford to fail.

The distant chime of the clock tower drew Ethan's attention, prompting a weary sigh. Although eager to visit the Hall of Assignments, duty required that he wait and attend his scheduled classes in the interim.



Reluctantly, he closed the book, marking his place with a blue ribbon before standing up and stretching his stiff limbs. His spine popped in protest, a not-so-gentle reminder he'd been sitting far too long. At this rate, he'd look like a wizard-in-training hunchback before his seventeenth birthday.

Ethan stuffed his notes into his bag, flipping his slightly too-long black hair out of his eyes. Still, his mind wandered

among the prophecies' tangled verses - endless echoes of meaning. There was always more to learn, more to discover. Riddles that always seemed to lead to more questions than answers. The Realm of Knowledge demanded nothing less than relentless curiosity and dedication.

As he navigated the intricate corridors of the library, he found himself once again in awe of its design. The high vaulted ceilings, painted blue with millions of stars on them, seemed to whisper secrets to those who cared to listen. Enchanted chandeliers floated above, throwing just enough light to make everything look mysterious on purpose. It was quiet and beautiful at the same time.

To Ethan, the library was basically holy ground, minus the sermons, plus a lot more dust. It was the one place he could get lost for hours and feel like it actually counted as productivity. Within the Realm of Knowledge, it was top-tier real estate, where brains came to worship books instead of sleep.

But beyond these sacred halls, intellect wasn't always celebrated, and they dismissed Ethan's brilliance with a single word: nerd. Still, he wore it like quiet armor, knowing what others mocked was what made him extraordinary. He was not just another nerd with his nose in a book.

Zephyra's society had distinct realms, and each realm had unique magical disciplines and cultural traditions. This structure, however, fostered a rigid social hierarchy. Individuals were often judged by their realm of origin - and within those same realms, by the strength of their magic. As a member of the

Realm of Knowledge, Ethan was all too familiar with such prejudices.

Leaving the library behind, Ethan headed for his Ancient Magical Languages class. The Academy was a masterpiece of design - endless halls, towering lecture rooms, and labs where potions bubbled beside enchanted tools that thrummed with quiet energy. Everywhere he looked, students were hard at work, chasing the secrets of magic and trying to understand the universe one spell at a time.

The halls mirrored the grandeur of the library, their vaulted ceilings and marble floors exuding an air of timeless refinement. Portraits of distinguished scholars and mages adorned the walls, their solemn gazes serving as a constant reminder of the illustrious tradition to which Ethan now belonged.

As he got to the classroom, he lingered at the threshold, eyes lifting to the view beyond the glass. The view from the second floor was worth it, though: towers stretched into the sky like overachievers, covered in carvings of ancient runes that might've been powerful spells or just really fancy wallpaper. Rumors leaned both ways. For Ethan, though, it wasn't about the mystery. He just liked the symbolism. Scholars shooting for the stars? Yeah, that felt about right.

Driven by his hunger to learn, Ethan stepped into the classroom with quiet determination. Around him, students were already deep in study, their focus mirroring his own. Slipping into his usual seat near the front, he sat with humility but purpose - ready to grow, ready to learn.

“Hey man, where were you at breakfast?” someone said, giving him a friendly clap on the shoulder.

Ethan looked up to see Alden Thorne, his best friend, grinning beside him. He started to answer, but Alden beat him to it - laughing and smacking his own forehead like he’d just remembered something obvious.

“The library, of course.” Alden stared at Ethan like he’d just announced he enjoyed homework for fun. “We’ve barely started the year! You’re supposed to be easing in, not speed running your academic burnout.”

“It’s never too early to be prepared,” Ethan said, pulling a small stack of books from his bag. “Besides, the Celestial Convergence assignments could be handed out at any moment.”



He arched a conspiratorial eyebrow, pinning Alden with a look. His friend’s honey eyes widened, and he leaned in closer, ash blond hair slipping over his forehead.

“Wait, were you summoned already?” he

whispered.

Ethan said nothing, just kept that smug little look, clearly enjoying the suspense. “Ethan, c’mon—”

“Shhh,” Ethan murmured, glancing toward the front. “The lecture’s about to start.”

Alden shook his head, surrendering to the inevitable pull of the moment as Professor Liora lifted her hand. She was a woman carved by time but lit by brilliance, her eyes sharp as truth itself.

At her gesture, the chalkboard behind her came to life, displaying complex scripts and symbols that danced in mid-air. Ethan’s eyes lit up as he followed her every word, his quill moving swiftly across the parchment, tracing the heartbeat of magic itself.

“Today, we’re going to dive into the linguistic structure of the Arcane Scripts,” Professor Liora announced, her voice carrying easily through the room. Then, her sharp gaze landed on him. “Ethan, would you translate this passage for the class?”

Ethan adjusted his glasses and focused on the floating text. “In the dawn of the first age, when the stars aligned in perfect harmony, someone forged the Celestial Sphere from the purest starlight, a beacon of hope against the darkness that consumed the world,” he translated smoothly. Then he added, “This passage describes the creation of a powerful artifact that harnesses the energy of the stars.”

The room fell quiet as everyone listened, clearly impressed by how easily the words flowed from him.

“Excellent work, Ethan,” Professor Liora said with a proud smile - one that carried just a hint of smugness, as if his success was proof of her own.

When the lecture concluded, Ethan was organizing his notes when several classmates approached him. At the forefront was Elara Wren, her eyes wide with admiration. “Ethan, that was incredible,” she said, her voice filled with genuine awe. “I could barely string two words together, and you made it look so easy.”

Ethan felt his cheeks flush slightly. “Oh, it’s just practice,” he mumbled, looking down at his feet.

Elara smiled, touching his arm briefly. “Well, it certainly paid off. You were amazing.”

She departed with her companions, soft laughter echoing as she cast one last glance over her shoulder before exiting the room.

Behind him, Alden let out an amused chuckle. “It would appear you’ve attracted an admirer,” he said, tone teasing yet good-natured.

Ethan waved him off, rolling his eyes. “Hilarious, Alden,” he said, shaking his head. “She was just being nice.”

“Sure, Ethan,” Alden said with a smirk. “Just being nice.”

The bell tower’s chime filled the air, calling students to their next class.



“Ugh, spell craft time,” Alden groaned, grabbing his things. “But don’t think I’ve forgotten, bookworm. I expect a full, dramatic retelling of your grand assignment later - bonus points if there’s a plot twist.”

Ethan opened his mouth to tell him he didn’t even have the assignment yet, but Alden was already halfway down the hall, calling out to friends and waving like he didn’t have a care in the world. Shaking his head, Ethan turned in the opposite direction and headed for the alchemy lab.

The Academy organized four distinct branches, each aligned with one realm. Students generally studied within their branches, but they all took shared introductory courses like Introduction to Arcane Arts, Elemental Manipulation, and Alchemy. To reach the alchemy laboratory, Ethan needed to pass the central courtyard connecting the four divisions.

Harmony Court was what happened when four architects from different realms couldn’t agree on a style - and yet, somehow, it worked. Enchanted fountains bubbled with glowing water, exotic plants from different realms perfumed the air like an enchanted greenhouse, and bright flowers leaned against serious stone statues, doing their best to add some flair. It shouldn’t have worked, but it absolutely did.



The sun poured golden light over the courtyard as Ethan made his way down the cobblestone path. His thoughts were a jumble of excitement and anxiety about the upcoming Celestial Convergence. But something ahead caught

his attention. A crowd had gathered near the center of the courtyard, watching a lone figure perform a demonstration. Curious, Ethan stood on his toes for a better look and froze when he saw who it was.

Luna Silverwind stood at the center of the crowd, performing a dazzling light spell. Her hands moved with practiced grace, weaving beams of light into shimmering shapes that twisted and danced through the air. Her pale blonde hair caught the sunlight, glowing almost as bright as the magic itself. Confidence radiated from her - no surprise, considering she was the top student from the Realm of Light and the star of the dueling team. Luna was magnetic; every motion seemed effortless, every smile perfectly timed. Surrounded by friends and admirers, she carried herself like someone born to shine - and to make everyone else feel a little smaller in her glow.

A quiet ache bloomed in his chest. Ethan couldn't help the mix of envy and admiration that stirred inside him as he watched her. Everything Luna did looked effortless - every

gesture, every flicker of light perfectly under control. It was hard not to notice how easily she commanded attention, especially when he always seemed to fade into the background. The contrast was clear: where she belonged to the light; he was still learning how to be seen.

Lost in his own thoughts, Ethan almost didn't notice when Luna's eyes met his. For that single heartbeat, it felt as if the world had paused - a spark of recognition, or maybe curiosity? Then she turned away, her attention returning to the light she commanded, leaving Ethan's pulse racing with possibility.

Cold doubt slipped through his chest like a shadow. Perhaps her gaze had never truly met his? Perhaps, it had passed through him, unknowing, unseeing. To her, he was only a ripple in the crowd, nameless as mist beneath the light.

Ethan could feel it - the sideways glances, the not-so-subtle whispers. "That's him?" someone said, as if he were some rare creature at a zoo exhibit. Another student snickered, unimpressed, probably expecting someone taller, flashier, or less perpetually anxious.

Ethan dropped his gaze, feeling the weight of their judgment press down on him. He tightened his grip on his bag and quickened his pace, eager to leave the courtyard behind. The place that had seemed so alive and bright a moment ago now felt suffocating - a vivid reminder of the social divide between him and students like Luna.

Ethan forced himself to let go of the sting of the courtyard and turned his focus to what mattered - learning. The comforting rhythm of the classroom, the rustle of parchment and the quiet energy of study, steadied his pulse and cleared his mind.

The day carried on with a blur of lectures and lab sessions - enough to keep Ethan's mind busy, but not enough to stop the slow drain of social exhaustion. By the time lessons ended, he was back in his dorm, sinking onto his bed with a sigh. The room was its usual mess of books, scrolls, and magical odds and ends. Alden liked to call it a disaster zone, but Ethan preferred organized chaos. Papers and notebooks filled with his careful notes buried his desk, and shelves overflowing with ancient tomes lined the walls. It was cluttered, yes - but it was his.

Alden's half was a study in simplicity - shelves sparsely filled, every item placed with quiet intention. Where Ethan's side breathed with the pulse of thought and motion, Alden's exhaled stillness - two halves of a whole, order and chaos sharing the same air.

Ethan melted into his pillows, enjoying the rare silence of the dorm. Of course, his brain had other plans. It replayed the day like a bad highlight reel — the whispers, the looks, the whole awkward spectacle. He sighed. Luna shone without any effort, her light unquestioned. He wished, just once, he could feel the world look at him the same way.

Something about that moment with Luna sparked a fire in Ethan. He didn't want just to be seen. He wanted to prove himself, to rise beyond the boundaries others had drawn around

him. It was the dream that had guided him since the day he'd earned his place at the Academy, defying doubt and circumstance alike.

Ethan shook his head, pushing away the doubt. Instead, he focused on what lay ahead - the project. It was his only chance to step beyond the safety of books and quiet corners, to prove that he belonged here just as much as anyone else. He could do this. He would do this!

There was a catch, of course. There always was. The Celestial Convergence required students to team up with someone from another realm. On paper, it encouraged unity and collaboration, but in reality, it was more like a forced peace treaty. The tension between the realms ran deep, older than most could remember, and it seeped into every corner of Academy life. Most students treated the project as a hassle, and somehow, it always seemed to be the ones from the Realm of Knowledge who ended up doing most of the work.

For the first time, he would stand. Not as a follower, but as a force of his own. Whoever fate bound to his path, they would not eclipse him. He would not let anyone use him or overlook him. Not this time.

Would someone from the Realm of Nature be his partner? That wouldn't be so bad. They were usually calm, patient, and easy to work with. He could handle that. But the thought of being matched with someone from the Realm of Shadows made his stomach twist; he never knew what to say to them, or even how to act. And worse still, the Realm of Light. If he got one of them, his life would turn into a nightmare of

smug smiles and superiority. No way was he letting one of those glittering perfectionists tank his grade.

As Ethan was still thinking, the door swung open, and Alden strode in, tossing his bag onto his bed with his usual flair. “Long day, huh?” he groaned.

“Yeah,” Ethan said absently, his mind still wandering through worries about the upcoming project.

Alden’s gaze darted to the scroll on the desk, and his grin was instant. “Ha! I knew it. You got the summons!”



Ethan gave a small nod. “Yeah, but the assignment’s tomorrow.”

“Ah,” Alden said, mock sighing. “So, tonight’s the calm before the academic storm.”

Alden gave a low whistle. “Still, that’s exciting. I wonder when mine’s coming. Probably right after I finally finish last week’s homework.” He grinned, clearly amused by his own track record.

Alden flopped onto his bed, staring up at the ceiling with a dreamy grin, completely unfazed by anything resembling nerves. Ethan couldn’t help but smile. He liked that about Alden - the way he just rolled with things, no overthinking, no

panic. Maybe Ethan thought as he straightened his posture he could try to be a little more like that. Just a little.

The next day would mark the beginning of the most demanding project of Ethan's academic career. He could only hope that his assigned partner would approach the task with equal dedication and commitment.